

In the claims:

1. A storage processing device, comprising:

an input/output module including:

port processors to receive and transmit network traffic; and

a switch coupling said port processors,

each port processor of said port processors including a node to receive and transmit said network traffic, dedicated hardware assist circuitry to perform first selected port processing functions, and an embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform second selected port processing functions.

2. The storage processing device of claim 1 further comprising:

a control module coupled to said input/output module, said input/output module directly processing the majority of said network traffic, and said control module processing a minority of said network traffic.

3. The storage processing device of claim 1, each port processor further including a second embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform said second selected port processing functions.

4. The storage processing device of claim 1, each port processor further including a second embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform third selected port processing functions.

5. The storage processing device of claim 4, each port processor further including a third embedded processor to perform fourth selected port processing functions.

6. The storage processing device of claim 4, each port processor further including a third embedded processor to perform one of second or third port processing functions.

7. The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein the node is a Fibre Channel node.

8. The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein the node is an Ethernet node.

9. The storage processing device of claim 1, wherein the node is selectable between an Ethernet node and a Fibre Channel node.

10. A fabric for coupling at least one host and at least one storage device, the fabric comprising:

at least one switch for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device; and

a storage processing device coupled to the at least one switch and for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device, the storage processing device including:

an input/output module including:

port processors to receive and transmit network traffic; and

a switch coupling said port processors,

each port processor of said port processors including a node to receive and transmit said network traffic, dedicated hardware assist circuitry to perform first selected port processing functions, and an embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform second selected port processing functions.

11. The fabric of claim 10 further comprising:

a control module coupled to said input/output module, said input/output module directly processing the majority of said network traffic, and said control module processing a minority of said network traffic.

12. The fabric of claim 10, each port processor further including a second embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform said second selected port processing functions.

13. The fabric of claim 10, each port processor further including a second embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform third selected port processing functions.

14. The fabric of claim 13, each port processor further including a third embedded processor to perform fourth selected port processing functions.

15. The fabric of claim 13, each port processor further including a third embedded processor to perform one of second or third port processing functions.

16. The fabric of claim 10, wherein the node is a Fibre Channel node.

17. The fabric of claim 10, wherein the node is an Ethernet node.

18. The fabric of claim 10, wherein the node is selectable between an Ethernet node and a Fibre Channel node.

19. A network comprising:
at least one host;
at least one storage device; and
a fabric coupling the at least one host and the at least one storage device, the fabric comprising:
at least one switch for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device; and
a storage processing device coupled to the at least one switch and for coupling to the at least one host and the at least one storage device, the storage processing device including:
an input/output module including:
port processors to receive and transmit network traffic;
and
a switch coupling said port processors,
each port processor of said port processors including a node to receive and transmit said network traffic, dedicated hardware assist circuitry to perform first selected port processing functions, and an embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform second selected port processing functions.

20. The network of claim 19 further comprising:

a control module coupled to said input/output module, said input/output module directly processing the majority of said network traffic, and said control module processing a minority of said network traffic.

21. The network of claim 19, each port processor further including a second embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform said second selected port processing functions.

22. The network of claim 19, each port processor further including a second embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform third selected port processing functions.

23. The network of claim 22, each port processor further including a third embedded processor to perform fourth selected port processing functions.

24. The network of claim 22, each port processor further including a third embedded processor to perform one of second or third port processing functions.

25. The network of claim 19, wherein the node is a Fibre Channel node.

26. The network of claim 19, wherein the node is an Ethernet node.

27. The network of claim 19, wherein the node is selectable between an Ethernet node and a Fibre Channel node.

28. A method for handling network traffic in a storage processing device, comprising:

providing an input/output module including:

port processors receiving and transmitting network traffic; and

a switch coupling said port processors,

each port processor of said port processors including a node receiving and transmitting said network traffic, dedicated hardware assist circuitry performing first selected port processing functions, and an embedded processor and associated port processor firmware performing second selected port processing functions.

29. The method of claim 28 further comprising:
providing a control module coupled to said input/output module, said
input/output module directly processing the majority of said network traffic, and said
control module processing a minority of said network traffic.

30. The method of claim 28, each port processor further including a second
embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform said second
selected port processing functions.

31. The method of claim 28, each port processor further including a second
embedded processor and associated port processor firmware to perform third selected
port processing functions.

32. The method of claim 31, each port processor further including a third
embedded processor to perform fourth selected port processing functions.

33. The method of claim 31, each port processor further including a third
embedded processor to perform one of second or third port processing functions.

34. The method of claim 28, wherein the node is a Fibre Channel node.

35. The method of claim 28, wherein the node is an Ethernet node.

36. The method of claim 28, wherein the node is selectable between an
Ethernet node and a Fibre Channel node.